

**Department of Transportation
State Project No. 92-672
Capacity & Operational Improvements on Route 69
In the Vicinity of Route 15 Interchange 59
City of New Haven and Town of Woodbridge**

**Public Informational Meeting
May 03, 2016 - 7:00 p.m.
Woodbridge Senior Center
4 Meetinghouse Lane**

Meeting Minutes

Representatives Present:

Connecticut Department of Transportation:

William Britnell, P.E., Principal Engineer – Division of Highway Design
Scott Bushee, P.E., Project Manager – Division of Highway Design
Byong Kim, Project Engineer – Division of Highway Design
Michelle Saldana, Design Engineer – Division of Highway Design
James Massini, Project Engineer – Division of Traffic Engineering (Project Design)
Snow Peng, Design Engineer – Division of Traffic Engineering (Project Design)
Douglas Hummel – Office of Rights of Way
Chellis Allen – Office of Rights of Way
Steven Hebert – District 3 Construction

City of New Haven:

Giovanni Zinn – City Engineer
Doug Hausladen – Local Traffic Authority

Town of Woodbridge:

Ellen Scalettar – First Selectman
Betsy Yagla – Assistant Administrative Officer

Presentation: Following a brief introduction by First Selectman Scalettar, Mr. Scott Bushee and Mr. Byong Kim gave a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation on the project. In addition, Ms. Chellis Allen discussed the rights-of-way process.

The presentation covered the following items:

- ⇒ The project location and purpose of the project was described. There is heavy congestion and traffic backup on Route 69, on both the Route 15 northbound and southbound exit ramps and on Pond Lily Avenue. Route 69 has very narrow lanes and shoulders. In addition, there is a gap in the existing sidewalk network and crosswalks need to be improved.
- ⇒ Proposed improvements for Route 69 include minor widening to accommodate wider lanes and shoulders. Also, widening on Route 69, near the Route 15 southbound ramps intersection will allow for an exclusive right-turn lane to the Route 15 southbound entrance ramp. Sidewalk will be provided along Route 69 starting near the Route 69 and Route 63 intersection extending northerly to Lucy Street. In addition, installation of

new sidewalk ramps and pedestrian crossings will be provided at the Route 69 and Route 63 intersection.

- ⇒ Proposed improvements on the Route 15 northbound exit ramp include minor widening to accommodate a two-lane approach onto Route 69, and installation of a new traffic signal. Proposed improvements on the Route 15 southbound exit ramp include minor widening to accommodate an additional left-turn lane onto Route 69.
- ⇒ A raised island is being proposed at the intersection of Pond Lily Avenue and Route 69 with no left turns allowed out of Pond Lily Avenue. A new stop sign will be installed on Pond Lily Avenue at the Route 15 northbound entrance ramp.
- ⇒ There will be some partial acquisitions, slope and construction easements required.
- ⇒ Most work is anticipated to be done at night. Traffic will be maintained during construction with one lane in each direction of travel.
- ⇒ Ramp closures and detours are expected.
- ⇒ The project is scheduled to begin in spring 2018, and be completed in summer 2019.

Public Comments and Questions: Approximately 75 residents and public officials attended, many of whom had comments and questions after the presentation. The comments/questions are summarized below:

1. *A few residents asked about the need for sidewalk improvements in the area. They stated that there is not much pedestrian traffic. There are clear worn foot-paths along grass areas on Route 69 which indicates frequent foot traffic. There is also no connectivity in the existing sidewalk system. Both municipalities had requested to make the area more pedestrian friendly.*
2. *Many of the residents complained about the queue on Route 69 extending north of Lucy Street, and having to sit in traffic during several signal cycles. It was explained that with the proposed no left turns out of Pond Lily Avenue a phase in the signal cycle will be eliminated and more traffic will be moved along Route 69 southbound. Also, the additional lane on the Route 15 southbound off-ramp will allow more green time to be provided to Route 69. In addition, the widening proposed on Route 69, south of Lucy Street will provide more storage length thus reducing traffic backups.*
3. *A resident brought up the closure of the merge ramp to access the Route 15 southbound entrance ramp from Route 69 southbound. He showed concerns with traffic now having to wait at the intersection for the signal to allow the right-turn movement. It was stated that vehicles will be able to turn right on red at that location. This merge ramp onto Route 15 southbound is proposed to be eliminated to reduce the conflicts between these turning vehicles and the left-turning vehicles from Route 69 northbound. Since the on-ramp is a single lane, the merge-ramp has to yield to the left-turning traffic but the generous radius of the merge ramp invites high speeds which creates safety concerns. The proposed design will improve safety.*
4. *A resident asked if the local roads were going to be affected by detoured traffic during construction. Because most of the work is proposed to be done during night hours when traffic volumes are much lower, less congestion due to construction is anticipated.*
5. *A resident stated that the overhead utility poles at the Route 69 and Route 63 intersection were very aesthetically unpleasant because of all the messy-looking wires. He suggested an underground relocation of these utility lines. It was explained that*

underground relocation of utility lines would result in a significant increase in the project cost and schedule. The intent of this project is to provide the best overall short-term solution to alleviate some of the major problems through this area.

6. *A few residents stated that a lot of congestion exists along Route 63 and side roads and asked if any improvements were being made on that area.* It was explained that this interim project's focus is strictly Route 69, from the intersection with Route 63 northerly to the intersection with Lucy Street. There are currently long-term plans being developed to provide capacity and operational solutions on Route 69, Route 63 and Route 15 to a much greater extent.
7. *It was suggested a couple times during the meeting to make sidewalks on the east side of Route 69 (along the Lily Pond/West River) into a trail/greenway with pervious material. Also there was concern with drainage from Route 15 depositing sediments into the West River at Merritt Avenue.* These suggestions will be further investigated.
8. *A couple of the residents inquired if there were plans to acquire the gas station across from the Route 15 southbound ramps as part of the project.* The gas station is currently being remodeled to open for business. This property is not needed for construction of the interim project, so there are no current plans to acquire this property.
9. *A resident asked to look into sequencing signals along the project limits. He stated that it is very hard getting in and out of Merritt Avenue because signals were not working in sequence.* It was stated that signals at Pond Lily Avenue, Route 15 southbound ramps, Merritt Avenue and Lucy Street would be upgraded to accommodate the proposed improvements.
10. *Some residents suggested widening Route 69 near Lucy Street to provide two lanes on Route 69 in the southbound direction to help alleviate traffic backups.* It was explained that additional widening in that area could not be made without significantly impacting adjacent properties and businesses. Also, it was noted that the improvements made on Pond Lily Avenue are expected to substantially improve the southbound congestion.
11. *It was asked if it was possible to combine the dedicated left-turn lane on Route 69, starting north of Pond Lily Avenue and extending north to Lucy Street, into a left-and-through lane.* Converting that lane to a combined left-through would create operational problems. There is a heavy volume of left turns at the Route 15 southbound entrance ramp. Any vehicle trying to go straight using that lane will be stopped behind those vehicles, lengthening backups. Also, the left lane between the ramps and Lucy Street becomes a left-turn lane for the driveways on the west side of Route 69. Using that lane to continue north past the Lucy Street intersection would force through traffic to change lanes, if stopped behind a left-turning vehicle, creating safety concerns.

Overall, the project received positive feedback and support; the majority agreed that the proposed improvements would relieve some of the congestion and would increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety on this portion of Route 69. The Department representatives continued to speak with residents informally until approximately 8:30 p.m.